

In September 2009, UMass Lowell established the Center for Irish Partnerships at UMass Lowell, one of 6 international partnership centers. The aim of these centers is to strengthen and coordinate ongoing international partnerships as well as to develop new education and research partnerships in areas of the world that pose strategically important opportunities.

The Mission of the Center for Irish Partnerships is to foster collaborations and partnerships with educational institutions in Ireland and Northern Ireland across an interdisciplinary spectrum including the social sciences, the natural sciences and engineering, the humanities and health and education fields. These international partnerships embrace faculty exchange and joint research ventures and to work with Irish partners to create a dynamic model for Cross-Atlantic collaboration that will promote and advance University of Massachusetts Lowell's goals to enhance the student experience by providing a global perspective to teaching and research, while contributing to Irish interests through exchange and service.

Slogan: "A Shared Heritage...A Shared Future"

The Center has four co-directors, Dr. Frank Talty, Dr. Stephen McCarthy, Professor Ann Marie Hurley and Victoria Denoon.

Here are a few things that the Center is currently involved with:

Institutional Collaborative Agreements

- In March, 2009, UMass Lowell and Queen's University signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote international partnerships between the two institutions. Specific areas of cooperation include:
 1. Collaboration between the Plastics Engineering Department, UMass Lowell, and School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering (Polymers Cluster), Queen's University Belfast in the areas of doctoral studentships, exchange of faculty, collaborative research and symposia.
 2. Collaboration between the School of Politics, International Studies and Philosophy (including Irish Studies and summer programs), Queen's University Belfast and UMass Lowell in the areas of collaborative research, conferences, doctoral studentships, and faculty exchanges.
 3. Collaboration between the School of Music (in Sonic Arts), Queen's University Belfast and Music Technology at UMass Lowell in the areas of collaborative research, participation in undergraduate study abroad initiatives, and visiting scholar arrangements for faculty and doctoral students who are in the process of writing their dissertations.
 4. Collaboration between the School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast and UMass Lowell through undergraduate exchanges, collaborative research, doctoral studentships and conferences.
- In July, 2010, UMass Lowell signed a Memorandum of Intent to Collaborate with Dublin City University with the following goals:
 1. To encourage visits by faculty from each University for the purpose of engaging in research and educational activities;

2. To support the exchange of both undergraduate and graduate students;
 3. To promote links between both institutions in teaching, research and cultural activities;
 4. To provide opportunities for the development of joint research programs;
 5. To foster the exchange of academic publications and scholarly research;
 6. To share experiences and expertise concerning university administration and management;
 7. To promote academic activities that will enhance the goals listed above.
- In October, 2012, UMass Lowell signed a Memorandum of Understanding between UMass Lowell and University of Ulster to collaborate on medical technologies and business model, in order to establish a framework for a collaborative research relationship between UMass Lowell and the University of Ulster. UMass Lowell appointed the Director of the Massachusetts Medical Device Development Center (Dr. Stephen McCarthy), and University of Ulster appointed the Director of MATCH to coordinate the development and implementation of the Collaboration.
 - In August, 2014, UMass signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National University of Ireland Galway. NUI Galway has a distinguished reputation for teaching and research excellence in the fields of arts, social science, engineering and informatics; medicine, nursing and health sciences; and science. Cooperation with UMass Lowell involves medical technology development and research. Specific areas of cooperation include:
 1. an initial focus on the areas of Biomedical Science and Engineering and Business and Innovation
 2. the exploration and development of collaborative opportunities and relationships between NUIG and other institutions in the University System in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with whom UML has existing relationships.
 - UMass Lowell hosted a visit from the University of Limerick in July, 2014. They are interested in developing a collaboration agreement that would focus on the areas of Engineering, literature and student exchange.
 - We are also in the process of developing an online graduate certificate in technology, arts and learning with St. Patrick's College Drumcondra and will soon be unveiling a new summer opportunity for students for an Irish Cultural Studies Program at Innisfree International College and Convention Center.
 - In addition, we are working on developing partnership activities with St. Mary's University College, Belfast, Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin and Letterkenny Institute of Technology in Donegal.

Emerging Technologies and Entrepreneurship Conference

- In October 2009, UMass Lowell hosted the first annual US/Ireland Emerging Technologies Conference at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center, engaging faculty and researchers from Queen's University, Dublin City University, UMass Lowell and leaders in industry. This international event featured experts from the three universities presenting and taking part in panel discussions on new research in biopharmaceuticals, medical devices, nanotechnology and more. Representatives of companies leading the way in those fields will spoke about how new technologies are being used in real-world manufacturing and product development.

- The second US/Ireland Emerging Technologies and Entrepreneurship conference took place at Dublin City University in October 2011. 6 faculty members from UMass Lowell took part as presenters at the two day conference.
- The third US/Ireland Emerging Technologies and Entrepreneurship conference took place at Queen's University in September 2012. Several UMass Lowell faculty members presented at the conference covering the areas of Advanced Polymers/nano materials and manufacturing and Teaching and learning.
- We are pursuing plans to hold a fourth conference in 2015, possibly at NUI Galway.

Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program

- In August, 2010, 3 archaeologists from Queen's University traveled to Lowell to take part in a reconnaissance excavation with 6 UMass Lowell students to unearth evidence of early Irish immigrants to flock to the city in the early 1800s. During the course of the excavation, the group uncovered over 1300 artifacts.
- In 2011 the next phase of the project took place. This involved a 2 week excavation program, 1 week in Lowell and 1 week in Northern Ireland, crewed by students from UMass Lowell and Queen's University.
- Phase three of the program took place at St. Patrick's Church in Lowell in July, 2012 and in Co. Tyrone in Northern Ireland in August 2012.
- Phase four took place September, 2013 (16th - 20th). This was primarily a research visit and included a complete catalogue of the artifacts and a 3D laser scan of St. Patrick's Church.

The Irish in Massachusetts: Historical Significance, Lasting Legacy – 2014 Conference at UMass Lowell

- As a result of the successful collaboration on the Irish-American Heritage Archaeological Program, UMass Lowell and Queen's University co-hosted a conference at the UMass Lowell Inn & Conference Center on September 24-26, 2014.
- The stories of Irish-American immigrants – from their work helping to settle New England and create its culture to their involvement in American politics – were the focus of the three-day conference
- "Irish in Massachusetts: Historical Significance, Lasting Legacy" explored the underpinnings of Irish immigration since the 1600s and the people's contributions to American life. Historians, artists, archaeologists and lawmakers led more than a dozen sessions about Irish-Americans' influence in music, literature, sports, politics and history. All sessions were open to the public.

Study Abroad Opportunities

- UMass Lowell currently sends students to Queen's University to take part in their international summer school in Irish studies, and this fall we currently have a UMass Lowell student spending the entire semester at Queen's as part of our study abroad program. This is our fourth year of sending students to the program.
- We have had 4 students spend an entire semester studying at Queen's University in Belfast.
- We hope to expand study abroad options to other universities that we have collaboration agreements with in the coming months.

Faculty Exchange and Collaboration

- Faculty Exchange Excellence and Equity in Education: Research Collaboration between Lowell, Belfast and Haifa completed a research proposal that will identify evidence based practices for school improvement and design intervention strategies to assist communities in improving their schools. The Belfast-Haifa-Lowell Group also completed a research proposal it intends to use to apply for grants from external funders.
- Several faculty members have been asked to give lectures at various institutions in Ireland including, National University of Ireland at Galway, Queen' University, Dublin City University and St. Patrick's Drumcondra.
- We have had a two faculty members do sabbaticals at partners institutions in Ireland, one at Queen's University Belfast (conflict resolution) and one at Dublin City University (Nursing). Another faculty member was awarded a Fulbright and spent time at Queen's University (Education).
- We have hosted faculty from Queen's University, Dublin City University and Cork Institute of Technology on campus for lectures and workshops, including:
 1. Dr. Peter Shirlow, faculty member from Queen's University Belfast came to campus to deliver a lecture on "Belfast: A post-conflict conundrum?"
 2. Dr. Gary Murphy, faulty member from Dublin City University and Fulbright Scholar, came to campus to deliver a lecture on "Ireland: From Celtic Tiger to IMF Bailout".
 3. Dr. Shane O'Neill, Dean of College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences from Queen's University visited campus to meet with faculty and students in Peace and Conflict Studies.
 4. Dr. Jean Hughes and Morag Munro from Dublin City University spent two days on campus meeting with various individuals about online learning, Centers for Learning and Innovation in learning
 5. The Center for Irish Partnerships and the Middle East Center co-sponsored a forum on Peace and Education entitled "Facing Conflict, Voices from the Field". Queen's University Pro Vice Chancellor Dr. Tony Gallagher and Linda Bishai, Senior Program Officer, Academy for International Conflict Management and Peacebuilding at the United States Institute of Peace were the panelists.
 6. Michael Delaney, Vice President of Development from Cork Institute of Technology came to campus to explore collaboration opportunities.

Business Leaders and Local Government Collaboration

- On June 4 and fifth 2013, Frank Talty spoke to the Irish Diaspora conference in Letterkenny, County Donegal. Dr. Talty was part of a panel consisting of Boston Globe columnist Kevin Cullen and then state representative Eugene O'Flaherty on the topic of immigration reform in the United States. Dr. Talty presented a second session on leveraging and maximizing relationships between American universities and third level institutions in Ireland. The conference was sponsored by the Donegal peace and reconciliation partnership, and supported by the European Union's regional development fund.
- In May, 2013, Professors Stephen McCarthy and Steven Tello were part of a trade delegation led by Senate President Therese Murray to Ireland and Northern Ireland. This visit included attending; meetings with government officials, the Northwest Health Innovation Corridor launch in Derry, roundtable discussions on potential areas of collaboration, meetings with business and industry leaders and the launch of e-health week conference in Dublin.

- The Center for Irish Partnerships hosted The Northern Ireland Massachusetts Connection (NIMAC), a group dedicated to advancing business, research and clinical collaboration, between Massachusetts, Northern Ireland and Europe, on campus in the M2D2 facility.
- The Center for Irish Partnerships has hosted three visits to UMass Lowell by delegation from Donegal, Ireland, including the Mayor and members of the County Council.
- In 2011, the Center for Irish Partnerships hosted Breakfast Roundtable for a delegation of local authority and business leaders from the Northwest of Ireland on the Green Economy and Tourism.

State Visits

- In November 19, 2010 – Visit to UMass Lowell by Irish Ambassador to the United States His Excellency Michael Collins and Irish Consul General to Boston, Michael Loneran.
- In December, 2011 – co-directors Victoria Denoon and Steve McCarthy attended a reception at the residence of Britain's Consul General for David Sterling (Northern Ireland's Permanent Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment)
- In February, 2012, directors of the Center for Irish Partnerships attended a reception at the Seaport Hotel for Taoiseach Enda Kenny, T.D.
- In March, 2012, Ireland's Minister for Children and Youth Affairs visited UMass Lowell for a roundtable discussion on Children's Rights with faculty members Dr. Linda Williams and Dr. Andy Harris from Criminal Justice and Dr. Stephanie Block from Psychology.
- In May 4, 2012, Chancellor Meehan and Frank Talty attended a luncheon at the UMass Club welcoming Irish President, Michael D. Higgins, to Boston
- In March 2013, Ireland's Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government, Phil Hogan, came to Lowell for a tour and met with Co-Director of the Center for Irish Partnerships, Victoria Denoon.